

DD/RS 7.2-2.267
7 June 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Personnel

THROUGH : Deputy Director for Support P&W 9 JUN 1972
SUBJECT : Fitness Reports

1. The attached memorandum on our Fitness Reports was used as backup but not actually circulated at a recent meeting of the Deputies together with the Director. There was considerable discussion of the merits and demerits of authorizing each employee access to his Fitness Report. The Director commented at the end of the discussion that he wanted the Director of Personnel to make a study in depth of the pros and cons not only of this question but of other aspects of our Fitness Report program. I am afraid that the attached memorandum is perhaps too summarized and too focused on one or two points to respond to the Director's request. Thus, I return it to you with a request to engage in a thorough review of this entire question.

2. The review should include, among others, the following subjects:

a. Civil Service Commission, other agency and private industry practice and experience with Fitness Report systems and any recent developments in this field.

b. Our investment in our present system in terms of trend lines and the benefits and drawbacks which would be involved in a substantial change in our present system.

c. Professional personnel officer views with respect to the benefits and drawbacks of authorizing full employee access to Fitness Reports. Occasionally a Reviewing Official comments on the supervisor's ability to assess or supervise the rated employee. I would appreciate your views on how this would impact on the Fitness Report System.

d. Steps which can be taken to strengthen supervisors and Reviewing Officials in writing Fitness Reports if they are to be made available to the employees.

e. Interim steps between full disclosure and concealment, i.e., a time limit after which the report would be made available to the employee, or other techniques of this nature.

f. Degree to which the use of panels restricted to the written record or authorized to search for other indications of employee performance might affect the question of the availability of the Fitness Report to employees.

g. Employee and supervisor attitudes toward the present Fitness Report system, to include reaction to the suggestion that they be authorized access to their Fitness Reports. Perhaps you can sample attitudes via personnel officer channels, command channels, or some combination of mechanisms. I have asked the Management Advisory Group to take a look at this and will share its reactions with you.

3. I would like to express my full support for your thought of encouraging employee participation in the Fitness Report process. I wonder if this should not even include a section of the report to be filled in by him, rather than merely a reference to the possibility of a memorandum added to it. This would force comment onto the form itself, with any additional material covered in an attached memorandum if necessary.

4. I am not sure I agree with your thought of eliminating references to assurances of "true" objectivity or validity. I agree that these may not have observable results, but I think they stiffen the spines of a number of supervisors as they fill out the report and give them a sense of unit pride in their office which has such an indicator. Thus, I would be inclined to encourage rather than discourage such an action. I am open to your further arguments on this, however.

5. Please let me know when you anticipate completing this review. Is 15 September 1972 a reasonable suspense date?


W. E. Colby
Executive Director-Comptroller

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